



Noxious Weeds Bylaw Revision Summary



Please visit our website to see the current bylaw and learn more about the process to revise the current bylaw by visiting www.saanich.ca/invasives.

The Noxious Weeds Bylaw was first adopted by Saanich Council in 1906 (the year the District of Saanich was incorporated) to address agricultural weeds. Three plants were named as Noxious Weeds: Canada Thistle, Ox-eye Daisy, and Wild Mustard. These plants are all considered agricultural weeds which leads us to believe the original bylaw was set in place to protect farming. Over time, the bylaw was updated to include new plant species that were also agricultural weeds, and eventually plants that were considered harmful to people and/or to the natural environment. Wording was changed and the bylaw title expanded.

BYLAW REVISION GOAL:

To accomplish greater environmental, social, and economic gains by shifting resources away from traditional weed concerns and approaches, towards contemporary plant issues and best management practices.

OBJECTIVES:

- To broaden and refocus the bylaw from mainly agricultural weeds to invasive species in general
- To consider other issues such as Naturescape gardening, neglected properties (tall grass, dandelions, weeds, etc.), agricultural weeds, and fire safety
- To align the bylaw with the goal, strategies and actions of the Invasive Species Management Strategy
- To update and align the bylaw with provincial legislation
- To increase the use of Best Management Practices for removal and disposal
- To address enforcement, compliance and administrative issues

TIMELINE HIGHLIGHTS:

Sept–Dec 2013	General Public On-line Survey (Closed)
Nov 2013	Public Open House I (Virtual Open House is available on the website)
May 12 & 26, 2014	Public Open House II
Dec 2014	Public Hearing to consider adopting the bylaw

HOW MANY COMPLAINTS DO WE RECEIVE UNDER THIS BYLAW ANNUALLY?

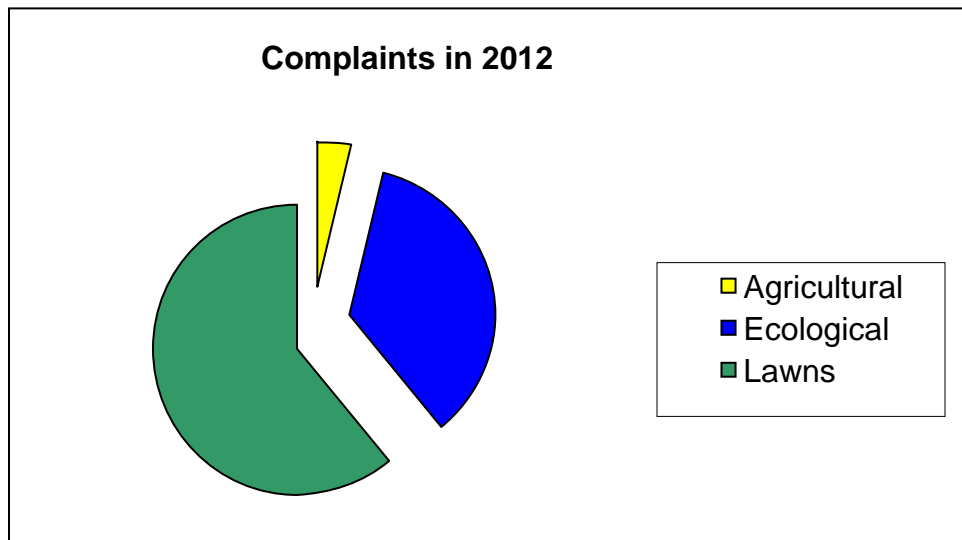
Saanich received 220 complaints a year, on average, since 2000. Not all complaints turn out to be valid cases. The number of complaints has been fairly consistent from 2000 to 2012. Most complaints are received in the months of April to October, peaking in July.



WHAT ARE THE COMPLAINTS ABOUT?

These statistics are based on 2012. There were 236 complaints. The statistics below do not add up to 236 because some plants fit into more than one category. Where comments were noted, most comments were about plants spreading, being unsightly, derelict, and attracting rodents. The Senior Bylaw Enforcement Officer estimates about 10% of complaints include fire as a concern.

- 171 complaints were about tall grass and weeds or a mix
- 62 complaints are about Early Detection/Rapid Response species (such as Knotweed)
- 61 complaints are about bylaw-listed species (such as Canada Thistle)
- 28 complaints were about species that can't be eradicated from Saanich (such as English Ivy)
- 9 complaints were about species of agricultural concern (such as Blessed Milk Thistle)
- 5 complaints were about species with human health concerns (such as Giant Hogweed)
- 1 complaint was about Naturescape gardening



SOME OF THE MAJOR RESULTS OF THE 2013 SURVEY:

A public survey was available from September 13th to December 13th, 2013. 250 people responded to the survey to give their initial opinions on priorities for a revised bylaw. Staff will use the survey statistics and numerous comments to inform the development of the draft revised bylaw. Most respondents live in Saanich and consider themselves somewhat informed about weeds in Saanich. A large majority of respondents were supportive of some municipal assistance to landowners as well as variable enforcement options based on impact.

The top 3 priorities based on **impacts** are weeds that:

- threaten natural areas and habitat;
- can harm people;
- threaten agriculture.
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The top 3 priorities for **management** are:

- weeds that are fairly new to Saanich and could be eradicated;
- keeping new weeds out of Saanich;
- weeds that can only be controlled in priority areas.

The top 4 priorities for action based on **locations** are:

- in or next to rare and endangered ecosystems and habitat;
- in or next to waterbodies and wetlands;
- in or next to parks;
- in or next to forested areas.